



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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PASCO COUNTY MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN FEDERAL COURT TO PARTICIPATING IN MULTI-STATE STOLEN CAR RING

Tampa, Florida - United States Attorney Paul I. Perez today announced the guilty plea in United States District Court of Camil Assaf to charges that he participated in a multi-state stolen car ring. Assaf faces up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000. His sentencing date will be in approximately ninety days.

Assaf, age 51, is a resident of Hudson, Florida. Assaf pled guilty to one count of a multi-count Indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Tampa on October 7, 2003. That count charged Assaf with conspiracy with at least four other persons, some of who remain unidentified, to transport and to sell motor vehicles which were stolen and then transported in interstate commerce. The Indictment alleges that members of the ring traveled to Mississippi, Michigan, Georgia, Virginia, South Carolina, and other states, where they "purchased" high-end, late model motor vehicles from private persons. In each instance, the motor vehicle was "purchased" by a counterfeit bank check which was worthless. The motor vehicles were then transported to Tampa and were subsequently sold by Assaf to unsuspecting buyers.

The case was investigated by the Tampa Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Dennis I. Moore of the General Crimes Section of the United States Attorney's Office.